



FULL LENGTH ARTICLE

Prediction of students' level of academic motivation based on the faculty members' components of professional behavior at Islamic Azad University of Roudehen

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ABSTRACT

The main objective of this study is to investigate the relationship between the faculty members' personality traits and professional behavior with students' academic motivation level. The research method is based on the correlation hypotheses and a regression model is developed according to the relationship between the faculty members' personality traits and professional behavior with academic motivation level. For estimating the required sample size based on Stevens' suggestion, since there are three variables in this study the required sample size is about 120 subjects in this study. 166 students are selected through stratified sampling method proportional to the population size (group as the stratification). The Academic motivation scale (AMS) and faculty members' Professional behavior questionnaires are utilized in this regard. According to the analysis of first hypothesis about the difference between the students' experimental mean and the theoretical mean, the result of one-sample t test indicate that the motivation level is lower than the mean level. According to the analysis of the second research hypothesis based on predicting the level of academic motivation on the basis of linear combination of predictor variables, the faculty members' personality traits and professional behavior, for prediction of academic motivation variable, the correlation coefficient is equal to 0.37 and the coefficient of determination 0.14 and the regression analysis results indicate that 14% of academic motivation variance is explained by professional behavior and personality traits. The regression model by standardized coefficients is as follows:

Academic motivation (Standardized coefficients) = 0.205 (Professional behavior) + 0.265 (personality traits)

Keywords: Academic motivation, professional behavior

INTRODUCTION

"Motivation" is a factor which stimulates and directs the specific behavior and a response to this question: What is the basis of science learning? According to the psychologists' argument, the motivation is more important than intelligence. They have considered the motivation as the result of factors such as incentives, inner needs, curiosity, excitation, and causes which a person applies for events and results. What is the factor for forcing the students to learn? Why do the students have very different academic achievement in spite of quite similar learning abilities and capacity? Why are there many dropouts in spite of their learning capacity and ability? Why are some teachers dissatisfied with their careers after a while? Numerous conditions are discussed for learning. Some of the most considered ones are as follows: Students' personalities and abilities, readiness, motivation, past experiences, learning situations and environment, teachers' teaching methods, professors' behavior, the effect of practice and repetition, features of specific learning assignments, incentives, etc. The motivation is more important than all factors affecting the learning as far as it is argued that there are three important factors in learning as follows: 1- Motivation, 2- Motivation, and 3- Motivation. [25], Most of professors limit the students' good characteristics in traits such as hard working, cooperation and interest and others argue that these traits require the students' motivation. Most of the professors talk about the hard working students who finish the semester slowly, but steadily. (Cheryl, translated by Mohammadreza Naeinian and Esmaeil Biabangard, [7]) Studies have concluded that the students' motivation to learn is more important than the intelligence. Furthermore, for impact of motivation on learning, the studies indicate that a strong motivation leads to

steady learning and a low motivation leads to low learning. (Hay, 2000) In fact, the motivation is the driving force of effort and activity to learn and it maximizes the student's learning. Not only the unmotivated students are not willing to study and learn, but they also interfere with other students' practices due to their indifference and neglect. In this regard, there is an English proverb: You can lead a horse to water, but you can't make him drink. The motivation in students is similar to this proverb [14]. It means that we should make the students thirsty for learning, and thus he will seek to learn. It should be noted that despite the fact that the motivation is important in education, the person can also learn without motivation. [11]. In this regard, Ausubel wrote: There is a mutual and not a single way relationship between motivation and learning and there is no need to postpone learning activities in order to develop the interests and motives. The best way to teach a student without motivation is to ignore his motivational state temporarily and effectively teach him as much as possible. The motivation is a process under which the target-based activity is motivated and preserved. It is also a process, not a product. We cannot directly observe the motivation, but we can infer it from the types of behavior such as choosing the homework, effort, perseverance, and speech. The motivation is targeted and requires physical or mental activity; it also maintains the behavior [25].

The results of numerous studies suggest that the intrinsic motivation is more important than the extrinsic motivation in learning process. (Sharifi, 2006, quoted by Talkhabi, 2009) People with intrinsic motivation consider themselves qualified, competent and with self-control skills and they are seeking more to learn and experience fewer psychiatric symptoms. [9].

In study by *Bernstein et al*, quoted by Adibnia, [3], the impact of students' documents is investigated on their performance in test. Their research results indicate that the more the students attribute their scores in a test to personal abilities and easiness, the more they will get lower scores in next test.

According to a research conducted by Dr. Mohammad Abd-Khodaei and Dr. Ali-Akbar Seif and Dr. Yousef Karimi (2006) on developing and normalizing the academic motivation scale in male students at high schools and on investigating the effect of educating the study skills on enhanced motivation, the result of comparing the mean of both groups indicates that educating the study skills increases the individual motivation scores at the built scale.

According to a research by Ali-Akbar Sheikhifin [24], to examine the relationship between academic motivation, locus of control, and academic achievement in high school students in Bandar Abbas City, the results indicate that there is a statistical significant relationship between the high academic motivation and locus of control.

Based on the research by Mahmoud Bohrani [6], to investigate the relationship between the academic motivation and group study habits in high school students in Shiraz, the obtained results indicate a significant relationship between the students' academic motivation and study habits.

Bloom (quoted by Abedi, [2]) believes that the student's interest and motivation during learning play both the cause and effect roles. In other words, the learner, who is interested in the subject, will become more successful than the learner with less interest and this success enhances the level of their motivation towards a subject.

Lfransva [15], believes in his book "The Psychology for Teaching" that if the students are directed to the attribution of their successes and failures to personal efforts, their motivation for success will be enhanced.

The teacher's competence refers to his ability to sufficiently meet the needs and demands of teaching profession by an integrated set of knowledge, skills and attitudes, so that this set reflects the teacher's performance and measures (Nijveldt et al, quoted by Karimi, [14].

Teacher competence is a set of knowledge, attitudes and skills by which the teacher can help to develop the learners' physical, intellectual, emotional, social and spiritual growth. Teacher competence can be classified into three areas: Cognitive, emotional, and skill competence. The cognitive competence refers to a set of mental knowledge and mental skills which enable the teacher to identify and analyze the issues associated with teaching. Emotional competence is a set of teacher's attitudes towards the issues associated with education and the skill competence refers to the teacher's scientific skills and abilities in learning process. The competence in affecting the student is obtained from the set of three competences [17]. The student's success depends on the teacher's desirable features of skill, knowledge, and experience as well as his ethical competencies; and the teacher effectiveness performance and the knowledge-based education require his personal capabilities and competence. [16]. The individual academic competencies are determined based on their capacity and competences in the field of knowledge related to their field of study and not necessarily indicate the individual capabilities proportional to the workplace; hence, there is a serious distinction between what is needed in the workplace and what are called the academic competencies and degree, and the academic competencies do not always reflect the required capabilities. The competencies may be the acquisition of individual competence for working in a particular

profession during a specified time period, but there is no guarantee for its survival in future career path and they cannot be considered as the license for life-long learning and should be changed proportional to the time [1]. To strengthen the expected competencies, the plans should be developed by planners and become bases for developing the teacher training system. The objectives of teacher education curriculum enter the teacher competencies into the educational system. The relationship between the competence and objectives and contents is a mutual relation. In terms of planning and designing, the working path is from the competence to the content and then the lower levels of planning process; the competencies are determined and the objectives are developed based on the competencies, and then the contents are selected and organized on the basis of objectives. Therefore, the competence is the basis for design making at designing stage, but for acquisition, the direction is from content to competence. Determining the teaching profession's competencies is based on the educational system and the attitude towards human. Each sect determines the educational objectives according to the judgment about the human nature and then draws its good and desired teacher based on the final goals and aspirations of education [18]. The Islamic education has also focused on the teacher's roles and competencies; the considered teacher's characteristics are as follows: kindness with students, attempt at their behavioral modification and self-refinement, humility and dignity, presenting the subjects proportional to the learners' intelligibility, attention to individual differences, having a tidy appearance, no difference between words and deeds, attention to removing the barriers to learning and so on. It is emphasized that the teacher's appearance and speech show his competence and his professors should certify his competence. Imam Sadiq said: If the teacher does not act his knowledge, his preaching never influences the hearts. Imam Ali (AS) said: Whoever is Imam should teach himself before teaching others and should teach by behavior rather than the words. Imam Hasan (AS) said: Teach knowledge to others and learn the others' knowledge (Arosan Qilani, translated by Raouf, [22]). Nowadays, the teachers need to regenerate their knowledge about the ongoing changes in teaching-learning process [27]. The teachers' continuing and professional development is a key element to improve the quality of schools and learners' educational development [10]. Anderson [4], argues that the dissatisfaction factors with the changes should be eliminated in order to change the teachers' working practices or thoughts. The teachers should be changed to change the education. Learning is necessary for changing and learn from mistakes are necessary for learning and education [27].

Teaching is considered as one of the stressful jobs especially because the teacher's daily job is based on the social interaction and the teacher should make effort to control the students, parents, and colleagues' emotions as well as self-control. The teacher's positive feelings enhance his health and students' adaptation and facilitates the appropriate learning atmosphere by creating the positive effect [19]. Nowadays, the students experience the stressful events by different ways. The teachers are expected to teach the students the ways to deal effectively with such these situations, control the emotions, and express them properly [16]. Based on the existing research evidence, organizing the classroom is the important and vital feature which has direct relationship with students' educational and social development. In classrooms where the teacher has the ability to create a supportive and emotional atmosphere and utilizes more effective behavioral strategies, the students have higher participation and their learning rates are enhanced [20].

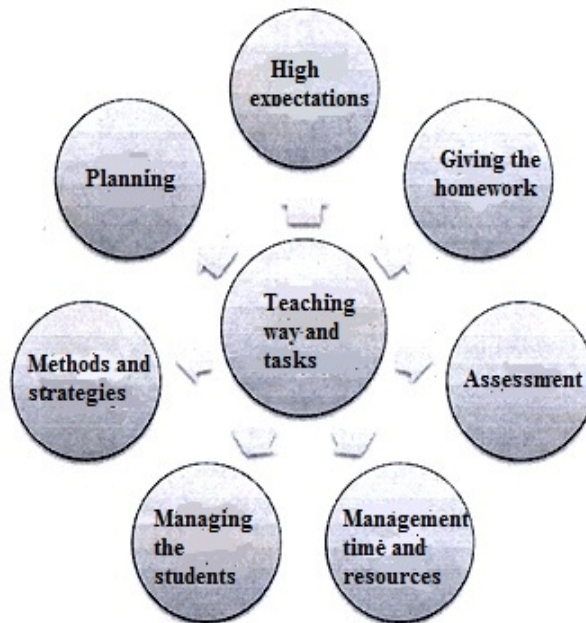
Teachers' professional capabilities (College of Teachers, University of Queensland, 2007)

Professional Standards for Queensland Teachers is a summary of capabilities which the teachers should have for qualitative education and supporting the students' learning. These ten standards are classified into three main interconnected sections, namely, teaching and learning, professional communications, and professional development. Each standard includes a set of knowledge, performance, and values.

1. Designing and applying the flexible and interesting learning experiences for individuals and groups;
2. Designing and applying the learning experiences for developing reading, writing and calculating;
3. Designing and applying the intellectual and challenging learning experiences;
4. Designing and applying the learning experiences according to the individual differences;
5. Appropriate assessment and reporting the students' learning;
6. Supporting the individual progress of and learners' participation in community;
7. Creating and maintaining a supportive and safe learning environment;
8. Establishing the effective communication with families and community;
9. Effective participation in professional groups;
10. Performing the thoughtful acts and professional continuous reconstruction.
11. Hay McBer considered 35 types of common partial behavior in effective teachers and classified them into seven categories based on the findings of previous studies (Figure below) as follows:

- High expectations: To have high expectations from students;

- Methods and Strategies: Applying a variety of methods and strategies to engage the students;
- Managing the students/discipline: To have a clear strategy for managing the students and governing the rule of discipline in the classroom;
- Assessment: Utilizing different methods of assessing and monitoring the learners' understanding of lessons and their performance;
- Homework: Integrating the homework with class working and its consistency with learners' individual needs and investigating them regularly



Hay McBer (2000)

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The research method is based on the correlation hypotheses. In such these studies, no variable is typically manipulated and only the data is collected and the regression model is developed based on the relationship among them. The statistical population, sample and sampling method in this study are all students at Islamic Azad University of Roudehen during the first semester of 2011-2012. To estimate the required sample size suggested by Stevens (based on 40 times higher than the number of observations according to the number of variables), since there are three variables in this study, the required sample size is about 120 samples selected through stratified sampling proportional to the population size (group as the stratification) in group of students. It should be noted that for probability of lost samples, this number is increased by 180. Finally, in spite of distributing 180 copies of each questionnaire and after eliminating the flawed questionnaires, the data of 166 questionnaires are extracted and analyzed. For selecting the sample, first 4 faculties (Psychology and Educational Sciences and Consultation, foreign languages, Engineering and Technical, Art and Architecture) are selected based on random sampling and then the questionnaires are distributed according to the number of students in each faculty.

Data collection tool

Two questionnaires are applied in this study as follows.

Academic motivation scale (AMS) is applied to study various levels of student motivation; it was introduced by Vallerand et al in 1992; it has 30 articles and Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.86. The confirmatory factor analysis results prove the seven-factor structure of scale and indicate the construct validity of Academic motivation scale.

The questionnaire by Fariba Karimi [14], with 90 articles is utilized for measuring the faculty members' professional behavior. She reported Cronbach's Alpha coefficient equal to 0.96 for the subscales of faculty members' professional behavior. It is worth noting that this questionnaire is modified and its components are dropped to two components, the professional skill and personality traits, and the number of questions reduced by 20. This questionnaire has 50 five-point Likert scale questions (totally agree – agree – indifferent – disagree – and totally disagree). The framework of this questionnaire is positive based on the cognitive theories of motivation in learning, teaching and psychology. Finally, the more the subject has higher score in this test, the more he has stronger motivation.

Cronbach's alpha coefficient is utilized for measuring the validity of questionnaire and it is done on 30 samples as follows.

| Variables | Cronbach's alpha |
|---------------------|------------------|
| Academic Motivation | 0.86 |
| Professional Skill | 0.91 |
| Personality traits | 0.89 |

It suggests that the questionnaire has high internal consistency coefficient and can be implemented on samples. Since the questionnaire of this study is a combination of two questionnaires, the Academic motivation scale (AMS) by Vallerand (1992) and the Teachers' Professional behavior questionnaire by Karimi [14], and because the results of factor analysis of confirmatory factor analysis indicate the construct validity of Academic motivation scale and Teachers' Professional behavior scale and the validity of this questionnaire is investigated using the teachers, professionals and experts' viewpoints, the researcher has confirmed the validity of questionnaire.

RESULTS

In this section, the research hypotheses are investigated in the community wherein the sample is selected through the descriptive and inferential statistical indexes.

There is a difference between the students' experimental mean and the theoretical mean.

The one-sample t test is utilized to analyze this hypothesis, so that the theoretical mean is initially calculated (90) based on the 30-item questionnaire and then the experimental mean is analyzed by t-test as follows.

Table 1: Summary of descriptive statistics

| Variable | Mean | Standard deviation | Standard error |
|---------------------|---------|--------------------|----------------|
| Academic Motivation | 70.8242 | 13.65916 | 1.06336 |

Table 2: Summary of one-sample t-test

| Variable | Theoretical mean= 90 | | | | | |
|---------------------|----------------------|-----|-------------------------------------|-----------------|------------------------------|----------|
| | t | df | Significance levels of both domains | Mean difference | With confidence level of 95% | |
| | | | | | Maximum | Minimum |
| Academic Motivation | -18.033 | 164 | 0.000 | -19.1758 | -19.2754 | -17.0761 |

Interpretation of results:

Given the result of one-sample t-test presented in the table above, the null hypothesis can be rejected by confidence level of at least 95%. In other words, there is a significant difference between the students' scores in sample group (70.82) and theoretical mean (90) in terms of academic motivation variable at the level of 0.05 and it indicates that the academic motivation is less than the mean level.

The academic motivation level can be predicted based on the faculty members' personality traits and professional behavior.

For analysis, we should initially study the hypotheses of implementing the regression analysis including the investigation of multivariate outliers, normality, linearity and uniformity of dispersion.

Table 3: Multiple Regression Analysis

| Correlation coefficient | Correlation coefficient square | Adjusted correlation coefficient square | Standard error of estimate |
|-------------------------|--------------------------------|---|----------------------------|
| 0.374 | 0.140 | 0.129 | 0.844 |

As shown in table above, the value of ($R^2=0.14$) means that 14% of variance in academic motivation can be explained by professional behavior and personality traits. In other words, 14% of observed dispersion in academic motivation can be explained by professional behavior and personality traits. The value of ($R^2=0.14$) indicates that the regression model can be used for prediction. Afterwards, F test which is also known as the overall regression F test is applied to find out whether there is a linear relationship between the predictive variables (independent) and the criterion (dependent).

Table 4: Summary of Analysis of Variance

| | Sum of Squares | Degrees of freedom | Mean square | F | Sig. |
|------------|----------------|--------------------|-------------|--------|-------|
| Regression | 18.600 | 2 | 9.300 | 13.041 | 0.000 |
| Residual | 114.099 | 160 | 0.713 | | |
| Total | 132.699 | 162 | | | |

Here, F is equal to 13.041. Given that the observed significance possibility (0.001) is less than the significance level of 0.05, it can be concluded that there is a linear relationship between the independent and dependent variables.

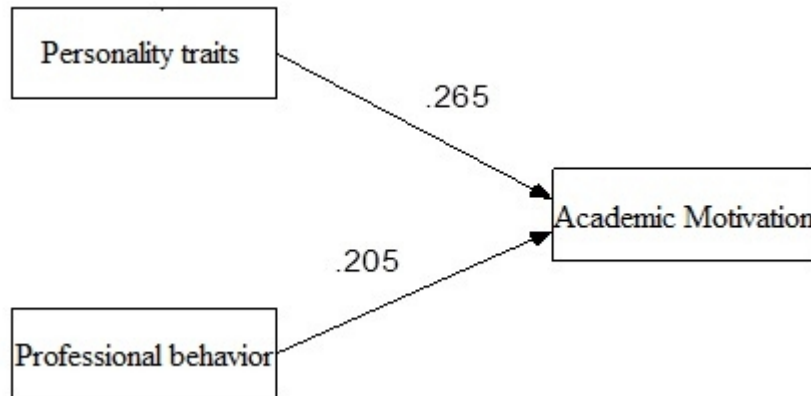
Table 5: Summary of standardized and non-standardized regression coefficients

| | | Non-standardized regression coefficients | | Standardized regression coefficients | t | Sig. |
|---|-----------------------|--|------------|--------------------------------------|-------|-------|
| | | B | Std. Error | Beta | | |
| 1 | Constant value | 1.074 | 0.205 | | 5.243 | 0.000 |
| | Professional behavior | 0.181 | 0.067 | 0.205 | 2.695 | 0.008 |
| | Personality traits | 0.220 | 0.063 | 0.265 | 3.489 | 0.001 |

The F statistics in the previous table indicates that there is a linear relationship between the dependent and independent variables. In such this case, the mean square of regression and mean square of residual are both the estimates of dependent variable for each combination of independent variables' values. Referring to the t statistics and the significance levels, it can be concluded that the professional behavior and personality traits can predict the academic motivation. For writing the formula, we can use either the standardized coefficients which convert the raw scores to z scores or the non-standardized coefficients which solely apply the raw scores. Here, we use both the standardized and non-standardized coefficients for writing the equation.

Academic Motivation (non-standardized coefficients) = 1.074 + 0.181 (Professional behavior) + 0.220 (personality traits)

Academic Motivation (standardized coefficients) = 0.205 (Professional behavior) + 0.265 (personality traits)



DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The first hypothesis analysis of the difference between the students' experimental mean and the theoretical mean and also the result of t test indicate that the null hypothesis can be rejected. In other words, there is a significant difference between the sample students' mean scores and the theoretical mean in terms of academic motivation at the level of 0.05, and thus the motivation level is less than the average level.

According to the second hypothesis analysis based on predicting the academic motivation on the basis of faculty members' professional behavior components and based on the linear combination of predictive variables (personality traits and professional behavior variables) for predicting the academic motivation criterion variable, the correlation coefficient is equal to 0.37 and the coefficient of determination 0.14 which indicate that 14% of academic motivation variance can be explained by professional behavior and personality traits. The t statistics and significance levels indicate that the professional behavior and personality traits can predict the academic motivation.

To write the equation, we can utilize either the standardized coefficients, which convert the raw scores to z scores, or the non-standardized coefficients which solely apply the raw scores.

Academic Motivation (non-standardized coefficients) = 1.074 + 0.181 (professional behavior) + 0.220 (personality traits)

Academic Motivation (standardized coefficients) = 0.205 (professional behavior) + 0.265 (personality traits)

Suggestions based on the research findings:

There are numerous studies on the academic motivation such as the research DocharRamz(2007, quoted by Shabani, [23]) that indicates that the mean score of independent models of behavior in subjects with higher achievement motivation is higher and the academic motivation has significant and impressive impact on the subjects' academic achievement.

Cox (1962, quoted by Talkhabi, [26]) conducted a research achievement motivation and its impact on the school students' scores. The results indicate that there is a significant positive correlation between the scores of achievement motivation and lessons.

However, the results of this study have reported the low level of university students' academic motivation. Therefore, it is suggested that the authorities should revise the method of acceptance and the balance of acceptable scores. The students should pass the prerequisite courses at the beginning of study in order not to have problems such as the lack of academic motivation at the higher levels of education.

In another study (Kate and Cole, quoted by Ghajargar, [12].) investigated the impact of several important factors such as the learners' abilities, teacher education, and learning motivation in more than 250 students. The learners' level of ability was the most important factor which had direct relationship with learning. Other two important factors were teacher education and learning motivation.

The second finding about the ability to predict the university students' academic motivation levels based on the faculty members' professional behavior and personality traits indicates that 14% of academic motivation variance can be explained by professional behavior and personality traits. Therefore, it can be concluded that the faculty members play the more effective roles in increasing the students' academic motivation levels. Obviously, the faculty members and other professors are considered as the greatest sources of a university. The university professors should agree that their roles are changing. In fact, their roles will be changed to the motivators and ideologists who are responsible for providing the deep understanding of scientific issues. Therefore, the university authorities should be careful in employing them and consider the criteria which are useful both in development of objectives at university and progress of educational goals and effective learning in students.

Suggestions for other researchers:

Since this research only estimates 14% of students' academic motivation variance based on the theoretical framework, there are other variables which should be investigated in order to estimate higher percentage of academic motivation variance. Thus, the other researchers are recommended as follows:

1. The students'
2. The status of university should be studied such as the organizational structure and department management, teaching-learning process at department, training courses and curricula at department, facilities at department, research and its quality education at department.
3. Re-conducting this study in other units and higher education centers in order to study the results in other units and on other students.
4. Conducting a research can be helpful for construction and validation of Academic motivation scale and faculty members' Professional behavior questionnaires for validity of results.

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